श्री वीरेन्द्र वर्मा : माननीय सभापति महोदय, यह सर्व मान्य तथ्य है कि खेसारी दाल, तजुर्बे के आधार पर भी सब स्वीकार करते हैं कि बहुत ही हानिकारक है । माननीय जोगी साहब ने भी कहा कि उनके लड़कों और आदमियों के हाथ और पैर इसके खाने से किस प्रकार के हो जाते हैं । डाइरेक्टर जनरल आफ हेल्थ ने आदेश दिया है, प्रचार भी किया है और माननीय मंत्री जी भी इसे स्वीकार करते हैं । तो केवल सस्ती होने के नाते देश के बच्चे और जवान बरबाद होते चले जायं यह कहां तक उचित है । एक स्टेट से अधिक में इसकी बुआई होती है तो फिर नेशनल स्तर की बात आ गई, राष्ट्रीय हित की बात आ गई । तो क्या मंत्री महोदय राष्ट्रीय हित में स्वास्थ्य की दृष्टि से डाइरेक्टर जनरल आफ हेल्थ के आदेशानुसार बिहार, मध्य प्रदेश और उत्तर प्रदेश तीनों जगह उन्हीं के मुख्य मंत्री हैं...

श्री श्याम लाल यादव : उत्तर प्रदेश में बैन है ।

श्री वीरेन्द्र वर्मा : बैन है तो इसकी मिलावट भी होती है दूसरी दालों में। सस्ते दामों में लकर इसे दूसरी दालों में भी मिलाया जाता है, फिर भी तो यह हानिकारक है । इन सारी बातों को ध्यान में रखते हुए क्या माननीय मंत्री जी इन सभी प्रदेशों के मुख्य मंत्रियों से बातचीत करके राष्ट्रीय हित में इस पर बैन लगाने की चेष्टा करेंगे ?

श्री हरवेन्द्र सिंह हंसपाल : कल्टीवेशन पर बैन ।

श्री श्याम लाल यादव : बिलकुल मैं आपके कथनानुसार कार्यवाही करने के लिये सहमत हूं ।

Diamond Reserves in Rajasthan

*82. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) what steps have been taken by Government so far to locate diamond reserves in Rajasthan;

(b) what are the areas where diamond reserves have been identified in Rajasthan stating the estimated diamond reserves; and

(c) whether Government have drawn up any plan to exploit these diamond reserves, if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES AND MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) to (c) The Directorate of Mines and Geology, Government of Rajasthan and the Geological Survey of India have been carrying out investigations for diamond in Rajasthan since 1985-86. Upon such investigations incidence of diamond has been reported from the lower Vindhyan conglomeratehorizon of Kesharpura area of Pratapgarh Tehsil, Chittorgarh district. Commercial exploitation of diamonds can be taken up only when the economic viability of the deposits is established on the basis of detailed exploration.

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Sir, the discovery of diamonds even in traces is of vital importance to the State of Rajasthan. The presence of diamond reserves has been confirmed in a number of areas of Chittorgarh and other places as mentioned by the hon. Minister in his reply. The National Mineral Development Corporation too have reported the presence of gem quality diamonds from rock samples of Kesharpura. Geological formations are also found at places like Kota and Jhalawar districts where the exploratory work is still to begin and the presence of diamonds to be established. A lot of survey will have to be done. To establish as to whether or not diamond mining on an economic scale could be established. If we succeed that will be useful for the economy of the State and also will be beneficial for the country. My question, therefore is this: Can the Government of India direct its agencies like the National Mineral Development Corporation and the Geological Survey of India to explore intensively to locate the diamond-bearing rocks in Rajasthan?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, I agree with the hon. Member. Up till now diamonds were found in India in the traditional regions like Panna and some parts of Andhra Pradesh like Golconda. But recently, Sir, we were fortunate enough to have a small conglomerate discovered in Rajasthan where although only one piece of gem variety diamond weighing ten cents from 60 KGs sample was recovered, yet we were happy because we found it in Rajasthan. Up till now we had only human diamonds from Rajasthan and the hon. Member who asked the question is one such diamond. They are all gems and diamonds. So, Sir, gems and diamonds are becoming a very important industry, particularly the cutting of gems and their exports. We are likely to touch Rs. 5,000 crores worth of export from cutting of diamonds. So, if we really discover good deposits of diamonds, we will be very happy from all these areas that have been mentioned and many more like, Kenpuria, Jogpur, Mandir-ki-Chowki, Mandwar and all these areas, Jhalawer and Kota districts. We have up till now, Sir, in the country done intensive work and the total expenditure that is estimated will be about Rs. 16 crores only for exploration of diamonds under National Diamond Project because we are keen that we should find these diamonds I agree with the hon. Member that this work should be intensified.

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Sir, the reply given by the hon. Minister is very convincing. I understand that some rock samples have been sent to the Geological Survey of India laboratory. I would like to hear from the Minister what has been the finding in the laboratory as far as these diamonds are concerned.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, we are now thinking of actually collaborating with a well-known French company for further studies because we find that there are good prospects. This internationally known company is M/s BRGM of France and we are collaborating with them to find out the quality and how we can further explore.

SHRI VISHWA BANDHU GUPTA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am very happy that the hon. Minister has been discovering human diamonds especially in Rajasthan

MR. CHAIRMAN: They are in Delhi also. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI VISHWA BANDHU GUPTA: But he forgot to mention them. Sir, I would like to know whether in this effort to intensify and try to get at the diamonds, the hon. Minister has sought the help also of the Space Department, whether any possibilities are there to find these diamonds quickly by remote sensing, for example. He has said that it will touch Rs. 5,000 crores mark. That is a substantial amount of money. And I believe that there is practically no upper limit to what we can explore. The world market can absorb a very large number of diamonds. So, even if we go to Rs. 50,000 crores in production and cutting, we could do it. I would like to know whether this Rs. 16 crores that he is spending for the purpose of exploration is adequate or whether an operation on a war-footing should be undertaken in Rajasthan to locate these diamonds, also with the help of the Space Department.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Yes, Sir, all possibilities of scientifically exploring the minerals, particularly rare and good minerals like diamonds are being utilised and will be utilised not only in Rajasthan but all over the country because we know the importance of finding this precious resource.

SHRI BIR BHADRA PRATAP SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir I have not seen the extraction process myself. But I have seen a film on that. I would like to know whether it is a fact that the diamond extraction operation of the Government of India has been running into a loss for quite some time. It is running into loss. The extraction process is such that it requires high expenditure, and inefficient and outmoded method of extraction which is applied to fish out the diamonds is another reason for its running into loss. So I would like the hon Minister to spell out plans to improve the situation by modernising the technique of extraction.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: We are trying to use modern technology and that is why I said that we are now collaborating with the best known people in this field in the world. I have mentioned the French company with whom we are collaborating, BRGM of France, and we are also utilising satellite sources to discover by remote sensing methods in order to locate the minerals in the country and we will be using all possible modern systems and methodology to reduce the costs and more efficiently discover this source.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question.

PIG IRON and Steel Supplied to Punjab

*83. SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question 156 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 3rd March, 1989 and state what steps are being taken for the allocation of adequate raw material for the Small Scale foundries in Punjab which are facing a threat of closure for want of adequate allocations of pig iron and steel quota?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES AND THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI VASANT SATHE): Pig Iron production within the country is proposed to be increased during 1989-90. Efforts are also underway to import pig iron from Rupee payment area.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: Sir, in my question, apart from the general problem of scarcity of pig iron, I raised a specific point of Punjab where foundries are facing a very serious threat due to lack of pig iron. According to the press reports, I find that the Punjab Governor has already sent a telex message to the Union Minister of Steel asking for immediate help in respect of pig iron for the foundries functioning in different parts of Punjab specially the area of Batala where 400 units are functioning and where also the terrorists are operating in a big way...

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: This problem is there in the whole country.

SHRI N. E. BALARAM: The Governor has already sent a telex message that appeared in the newspapers. So, to this specific question, answer has not been given. The answer is very vague. Of course, I will come to that in my supplementary question. I would like to know from the Minister what steps have been taken to supply pig iron to Punjab where there are large number of foundries functioning.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: As far as pig iron to Punjab is concerned, we did receive a telex from the Governor. We also got representations from the small-scale industries in Batala and we are despatching a rake immediately to meet the emergent needs. But I would like to stress that it has so happened that the production of pig iron went down because in the integrated steel plant of SAIL, it was more economical and advantageous in the national interest to convert the hot metal into steel rather than pig iron and that is why they produced more steel and less of pig iron. Pig iron production was aimed at 13 lakh tonnes or so; against that only 10 lakh tonnes were produced and this created a situation of shortage not only in Punjab where there is concentration of these foundries etc. but in other parts of the country also. We are conscious of it and we tried to do two things. One was to import pig iron. It was decided to import two lakh tonnes of pig iron at reduced duty. More than 1,35,000 tonnes have already come. The rest is coming. Some more we are trying to bring in. About one lakh tonnes of pig iron is in the pipeline for import this year. We are taking steps to meet the present shortage particularly in States like Punjab. We will do our best to see that the difficulties faced by the foundries are ameliorated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Have you any idea of permitting the private sector to put up pig iron plants?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Yes, Sir. That is a very good idea. Actually, making of pig iron is de-licinsed. But this will take some time, two or three years, before any units come up. It does not solve the immediate problem. Immediately, the